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November 19, 1999

Jessyka P. Chompff  
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Dr. Jane E. Henney, Commissioner  
Food and Drug Administration  
5600 Fishers Lane, HF-1  
Rockville, MD 20857

Subject: **Labeling** of Genetically Engineered Food

Oear Madam:

Like many Americans, I am very concerned about the safety of the food I choose to eat. I believe it is my right as a consumer to know if the food I am eating has been genetically altered. Such foods pose known and unknown risks to the environment, to famiyy farmers, to my health and the health of my family.

Corn has been genetically altered to produce a *Bacillus thuringiensis* toxin (Bt) which kills certain insects, and to withstand giufosinate, a widely used toxic herbicide. Two studies have shown that the Bt "enhanced" crops kiiled beneficial insects. Also, Bt sprays are organic farmers only emergency pest control option. If these pests become resistant to the Bt spray because of widespread use, organic farmers will be left with no defense. And please don't forget the Cornell study that showed that pollen from Bt corn also kills monarch caterpillars. The pollen, widely dispersed by wind, includes the crystalline Bt endotoxin and can kill monarch caterpillars feeding on milkweed dusted with it.

Genetic engineering poses a multitude of threats to human health. Strawberries containing flounder genes designed to allow the berries to keep better after freezing are on the market. Brazil nut genes have been added to soybeans in an attempt to make soybeans more complete proteins. What will happen to ail of the Americans with seafood and nut allergies when they consume these altered foods? Who will expiain to them the reason for their illness? "Why wasn't the package labeled?" they will ask. What will you tell them?

In May, a lawsuit was filled challenging the FDA's policy not to require labels on transgenic foods based on grounds of food safety. I am writing in support of the demands of this lawsuit for safety testing and complete and prominent labels.

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Consumers should not be unknowing test subjects in the industry's experiments with potentially dangerous foods. I am extremely eager to hear that the FDA is living up to its mandate to protect public health and will provide consumers with the information we need about the food we eat.

Please, do not let this issue go unnoticed. I am frightened. I want to trust the government officials who are in place for precisely this reason - to protect the American people. Do your job and make certain that our food is clearly labeled so that we as consumers can make the choice for ourselves.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessyka Putnam Chomppf". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping underline.

Jessyka Putnam Chomppf



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